

The Call of The Open Road

COAST TO COAST IN FIFTY DAYS

Must Choose Season and Route
With Care—Roads Plain-ly Marked.

An automobile tourist can go from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast without using a map and without consulting a guide book. All that the driver has to do is to follow a biased trail. Nothing is more significant of the automobile than the roadways which have been marked out across the country for making it easy for travelers to go from town to town, across State after State, and into all the places of the country. A thousand towns claim to be the gateways into various regions, and many places have regional features which justify them in their pretensions. A glance at any roadway map of the United States reveals many curious and influential features. Thus, between the Canadian and Mexican borders there are only seven crossings feasible under present conditions, from the Rockies to the Sierras, a distance of about 1,500 miles; and from the Missouri River to the Pacific coast there are only nine or ten practicable routes from the north to the south, and of these hardly more than five are connected with Canadian routes, says the New York World.

These are main, marked and feasible routes. Yet at times some of these highways are apt to be subject to delays and difficulties which baffle or greatly deter the passerby. When the great cloudburst assails the eastern slopes of Colorado's Rockies tourists caught in the canyons in the mountains and out on the prairies were subjected to experiences none of them will forget.

Thousands of people have in mind the transcontinental automobile trip. This is the premier automobile journey of the world. Not only is the journey entirely feasible but it is coming to be a regular jaunt of countless tourists who have the time to spare. People of Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma are only 12 or 15 days leisurely automobile run from the Pacific coast, but New York and Eastern States are twice as far, and if the journey from coast to coast is reckoned in terms of difficulties it is more than three times as hard to go from, say, Colorado Springs to Los Angeles as from New York city to Colorado Springs.

The conditions which a tourist used to New England and Eastern State roads confronts when he has crossed the Mississippi are astonishing. The work which States in the West have put upon their roads is enormous where one considers the population. There are about five miles of narrow paved roadway east from Reno, Nev., and then

hundreds of miles of almost unworked desert and mountain trails across Nevada, where at Ely, in the eastern part, are about nineteen miles of pavement as far as McGill, and then more hundreds of miles to Salt Lake City, where good roads appear from Springville out of Spanish Forks canyon up to Ogden.

And this is on the route of the Lincoln Highway, probably the best all around roadway from coast to coast, although in spring and autumn the Santa Fe route is perhaps better on the average under the tires, but the desert suns are merciless in July and August and part of June and September at least.

The astonishing thing about the United States is the ignorance of people about the actual conditions which confront the tourist, no matter in what direction he goes away from home.

The average automobile tourist actually has no idea whatever of the distance he must traverse to go from one place to another, no least notion of what he undertakes when he starts, for Denver or Los Angeles or San Francisco. Unfortunately, wonderlands of the country are shaded by the efforts of some people to belittle what, for example, Utah or Idaho or New Mexico have to display. The war of automobile trails bids fair to hide the genuine glories of the vast national domain.

The automobile speed record from coast to coast is approximately five days. Judging from this enormously difficult accomplishment tourists figure on a jaunt from New York to San Francisco in twenty days or so. This time demands nearly 200 miles a day of travel. The fact of the matter is, any one undertaking to drive from the Atlantic to the Pacific in thirty days has thrown the scenery of the journey away for the questionable privilege of watching the ruts and chucks.

It takes a strong man to hold a wheel from New York to San Francisco in thirty days steadily with 150 miles a day average; if there are any delays for broken springs and other troubles due to reckless driving over bad roads, day runs must be increased.

There is no way of avoiding the deserts, mountain ranges, poor roads or the great open spaces. The Santa Fe route follows the railroad closely, and the houses or towns are seldom more than twenty or thirty miles apart along the highway. A train must stop when signalled by any one in the New Mexican, Arizonan or Californian deserts. Water must be carried by every tourist who values his life. Every summer on the desert trails ignorance leads many to deadly peril from thirst.

The transcontinental trails are, counting from the north to south, the Wonderland, Yellowstone, Lincoln Highway, Midland, National Old Trails and Southern Highway. The Oregon Trail, from Oregon down to Salt Lake City, Pike's Peak, Ocean to Ocean and other trails are found along the highways, and it is probable that all the biased trails in the country number hundreds.

When the automobile made touring popular the Yellowstone Highway, from Chicago to the National Park, was extended to Spokane. Across the vast prairies, through the mountains, over the deserts and through the vacant spaces, splashes of yellow paint on

stones and on fence posts, on anything that would hold and show the paint, marked that trail. Stencils gave the black and yellow river of the Yellowstone Trail its distinction. The Buffalo Blood Trail, dark red blazes, led the old Sioux Indian prairies and little local trail rivalries stirred the Northwestern villages with grim determination to be on the trail lines.

As a matter of fact, the season for the journey is most important in picking a route. The spring itinerary would be from Eastern States via Chicago, Clinton, Iowa, and then, as the weather permits, into western Nebraska and southward through the dry sage and alkali of eastern Colorado and down into the National Old Trails, after passing the Kansas wet belt on the north. But the Haton Pass route is apt to be cold and it may be dangerous if one is caught on this backbone of the Rockies by a blizzard, even in May.

The easiest transcontinental to make is probably in the early summer, after the spring rains. The route would be the Lincoln Highway straight through. The Lincoln Highway isn't as good as the Santa Fe route, so far as actual road conditions are concerned. There are places along it where houses are fifty miles apart, where the water is bitter alkali, where the road is bad. But a start in middle May, a leisurely trip to the Rockies of twenty or thirty days, and then twenty days via Cheyenne, Green River, Salt Lake City, Ely, Nevada, and Reno, Nev., Carson City or Lake Tahoe, Placerville and over the beautiful California roads to San Francisco, camping most of the way, if not all of the way, includes the wonder of miles, mountains, deserts, wildernesses and the farm land empires of the country. The same trip may well be undertaken in August, but care must be taken not to run into early autumn snows of the Sierras beyond Reno. Better turn south along via Ely, into Bakersfield, California, rather than take the chance of being snowed back by the Sierras.

One should not be bound too closely by schedules or trails. Fellow tourists coming from one's proposed region give the latest and most reliable news.

Generally speaking, it is better to work into one of the main trails and stick to it than to travel hit or miss. No one should undertake a transcontinental trip without having his car put into first class order, tires in good condition and with a proper outfit for campaigning, emergency repairs and raiment for dust, heat and cold nights. It is, of course, feasible to make the whole journey, stopping at hotels, ranches and at other accommodating places, but in an emergency camping outfit will be needed, and food for all hands in case of breakdown twenty miles out in a desert or wilderness should be provided.

East of the Mississippi it is feasible to travel fifteen or twenty miles an hour, but every driver takes chances who speeds faster on strange roads.

But the way is biased and the watchful driver can follow any of the transcontinental trails from coast to coast by watching the painted signs. A good spotlight will enable him to travel night or day, and if judgment is used a car can be driven across at a cost of from \$75 to \$150 a week, total expense.

The Open Road.

By GEORGE GRAHAM.

THINK of the highways for what they are and not simply as winding ribbons between farm lands or as merely graded surfaces of clay, gravel, asphalt, macadam and concrete.

Let your imagination carry you further and see the highway in relation to the task it performs.

The highway is not simply a road. It is not simply a surface.

It is assurance of the civilizing influence of better communication between sections. It is a silent but persistent factor for the reduction of living costs. It is a humble but powerful foe of ignorance, since it is usually the route to education. It is the safeguard of your food supply. It is the guaranty to the public against the prostrating influences of industrial upheaval and interruption to distribution therefrom. It is the open air theater of enjoyment for the family. It is the connecting link between the home and the factory, the city and the farm. It is real estate insurance. It is the text book of nature to our people. It is the call to the open air, the physician who makes no charge for his services.

SOME TIRE TIPS FOR THE TOURIST

An Inspection of Your Equipment Beforehand Will Save You Trouble.

By E. S. UNDERHILL.

So much of the enjoyment of a long motor tour depends upon the avoidance of tire troubles that a few minutes may well be spared before the trip begins for such small attention as the tires require.

If a car is equipped with a good set of tires it is not only possible but quite probable that the tourist can finish a tour running into thousands of miles without the slightest mishap to the tires. How different from the old days, when a journey of one hundred miles was almost certain to be marred once or

twice by the necessity of getting out and making a change of tires.

Let the motorist give thanks in his heart many times as he sweeps along the gentle countryside to the art of the tire builder which has made American tires equal to the tasks put upon them. Here is one item of car equipment which has improved so vastly in the space of a few years as to constitute a real achievement of genius. The invention of the pneumatic tire made the motor car possible, and the development of these tires to their present standards of excellence have made motoring the downright pleasure it is today.

An innkeeper at Lake Placid recently returned to his home from a motor trip to Florida. He drove all the way down, spent the winter motoring about the State and then drove back to Lake Placid. When he got home he had in his tires the same air he started with—not the slightest sign of the trouble had appeared throughout the entire trip.

Many a motorist will start out on a long jaunt this summer and come home with the same sort of story about his tires. Nevertheless, if he is wise he will take before he starts on a long trip a few simple precautions to make sure that his tour will not be spoiled at any point by tire trouble.

When you begin your journey see that all the tires on the wheels are strong and in condition. If any one of them shows such signs of wear as to indicate that it may not finish the journey make a change before you start. If any risks are to be taken with old tires they should be taken on shorter jaunts—a bad tire may last out a short trip when it won't stand up through a long one.

The tubes should receive special attention. If the plungers in the valves are old put in some new ones. They cost but a few cents, and are well worth the investment. New plungers placed in the valves once a year are one of the best investments a motorist can make. With new valves there is no danger of air escapement and the slow leaks which frequently cause so much trouble.

Take two good, stout spares with you. With good tires on your wheels there is a strong probability that there will be no need of the spares, but at just the moment when you least expect it you are likely to pick up a nail or hit a piece of broken glass. One spare would be enough under ordinary circumstances if you were running about town, but when you are away from home on a long trip two are your best insurance.

In the tool box should be found a cold patch kit for making quick repairs of punctures, a blow out patch to take care of carcass ruptures, a roll of tire tape for tire or ignition trouble, a tire gauge for testing inflation and a can of soapstone. The equipment will include, also, of course, the requisite tire tools and a pump in good working condition. See that the rubber tubing and connections of the pump are in shape and that the leather piston head is soft. If the piston head has hardened it may be softened by a liberal application of vasoline. In the case of mechanical pump attached to the engine, make sure that the pump is well oiled, especially in the cylinder, but avoid excess oil, as it may find its way into the inner tube and damage the rubber.

PRACTICAL PARAGRAPHS.

Wheel Inspection.

One of the most frequent causes of excessive tire wear is faulty alignment of the front wheels, which causes them to scrape the tire along the road surface at each revolution. Whenever excessive tire wear develops the wheels should be inspected for misalignment, and if the car owner is not familiar with the method used in aligning he should have the service station do the job. The charge for aligning the wheels varies, but \$2 is about the average and this usually includes a complete inspection and adjustment of the steering mechanism from the post forward. Front wheels are always cambered and gathered; that is, they "toe in" in front making the distance from wheel to wheel in front less than that in the rear. At the same time the distance between the points of contact with the road is less than the distance between opposite points. These distances vary with different makes of cars, but usually the gather equals 3 per cent. of the tire diameter. Thus, with a thirty-four inch tire the wheel will be gathered about an

inch. However, the car owner who proposes aligning his wheels should get the exact figure from the manufacturer or from the service station.

Refitting Old Pistons.

When an old set of pistons reaches the stage where replacement is necessary, it is sometimes possible to avoid this expense by having the worn set expanded or swelled. The process used

for this is by heating the pistons one at a time in a bed of hot charcoal, which completely covers them. The charcoal is brought to a red hot heat and is then allowed to cool. When the piston is removed it is found to be considerably swelled sometimes as much as .004 of an inch. Pistons so treated are not as good as new ones, but considerable expense is saved, and the clearance is returned pretty close to normal.

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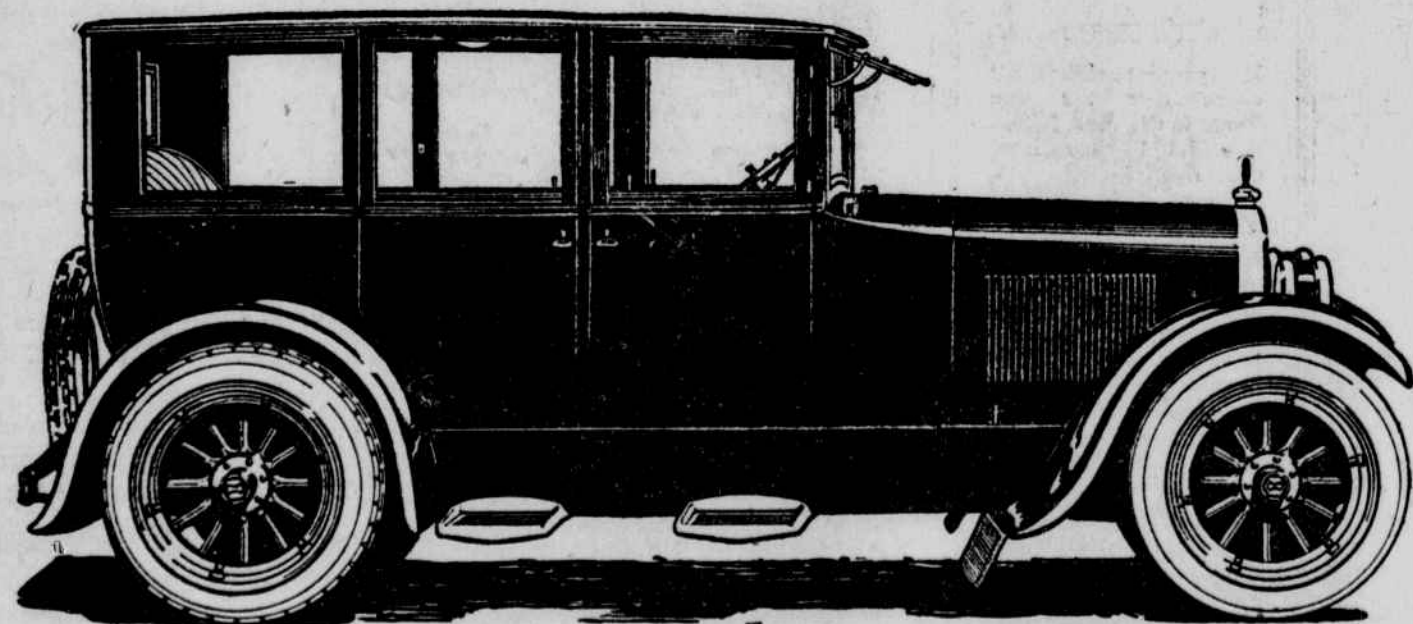
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